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MEMORIES



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W.B. Wilson

MEMORIES

BY
WILLIAM BAUCHOP WILSON

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REVISED

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DEDICATION

✦ ✦

TO my Father and Mother, whose hopes that their son might follow a literary career have not been realized, this little book is affectionately inscribed as a partial compensation for their disappointment.

WILLIAM BAUCHOP WILSON.

Christmas, 1902.

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PREFACE



I have no intention of inflicting upon the general public these few rhymes, written, principally, under the influence of youthful exuberance. It could not be expected to appreciate the circumstances under which they came into existence or overlook the defects they contain. I am looking for a more sympathetic audience. This little volume has been printed (not published) for circulation amongst those intimate friends of mine who can bury its poetical, grammatical and structural defects beneath their personal respect for the author. My friend, Sam, says: "No man ever writes poetry except when his liver is out of order." This may be true, and, if it is, I submit this book to my friends as conclusive proof that my life has been a reasonably healthy one.

THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.



No great, refined, poetic powers I claim;
No college learning smooths my humble muse;
Unknown to fortune, hidden far from fame,
I simply sing, because to sing I choose.
Nor shall I sing of lords or ladies fair,
Of kings or queens vain-glorious in might,
Of priests or parsons bowed in holy prayer
Imploring grace to guide their flocks aright.
Of chivalry, or gallant knights of old,
Who gloried in their prowess with the lance;
Who fought for ladies bright, for kings and gold,
For transient fame and pleasure, too, perchance.
But, as I tune my rude, uncultured lyre
I'll sing the praises of the multitude
Whose toiling brawn and brain and heart's desire
Moves ever for their fellow beings' good.

When England's mighty nobles gathered round
The sturdy oak on Island Runnymede,
All by a promise to each other bound
To give the future freedom's title deed
Signed by King John, and ratified by those
Whose genius grasped the coming of the hour
To organize the forces, to oppose
A tyrant monarch's autocratic power,
A strike was threatened. On the issue hung
"Liberty or death," freedom or servile strife

To all the race that speak the English tongue
And value liberty more dear than life.

When Freedom's goddess, sweet enchanting maid,
Had fled Columbia's ever beautiful shore,
When low, the hand of Justice had been laid
And brave men fought with desperation, more
To guard their homes from arbitrary wrong
Than to resist the payment of the cash
Which Britain sought, because her arm was strong,
To have, or force collection with the lash.
When through the time that tried men's souls
The patriot fathers stood, unconquered still,
Trusting to Him whose destiny controls,
To add a Yorktown to their Bunker Hill,
'Twas but a strike, born of a Union, made
By separate States, each of itself too frail
To thwart the wrongs imposed. But with the aid
Each gave the other, wrong could not prevail.
But strikes like these are far beyond my muse.
I leave them for a greater Minstrel's themes,
While I, a lowly humble strain may choose
And sing a toiler's hopes, his waking dreams
Of coming power used for the common weal,
Where all alike in God's eternal plan,
Sharing the burdens and the profits, feel
The spirit of the brotherhood of man.

But as I tune my rude, uncultured lyre,
I'll sing the praises of the multitude,
Whose toiling brawn and brain and heart's desire
Moves ever for their fellow being's good.

THE OLD TIN CAN.



There's a spring of sparkling water flowing out beneath the
hill,
Where the trees are tall and shady and the robins sport at
will,
As the breezes, soft and pleasant, in the summer's sultry
heat,
Play about in cooling eddies where the light and shadows
meet.
On a stone within the shadows sits a can of ancient tin,
With a band of rust about it and a coat of rust within;
But there's nothing God has given to appease the thirst of
man
Like a cooling drink of water from that old tin can.

You may sip the rarest vintage from the sunny soil of Spain,
Quaff the purest ardent spirits malted from the golden grain,
Or consume a foaming tankard of the brewer's purest mead;
Drink the fine Italian liquors 'till your blood is warm indeed;
You may praise with fitting ardor, either French or native
wine,
And all the ancient product of the Moselle or the Rhine;
But there's nothing more refreshing ever made since time
began
Than a cooling drink of water from that old tin can.



AUTUMN.



Sing Ho! for the depths of the forest glade,
For the rocky glen and the cool cascade
When the painter's hand on the hills is laid
And the Autumn leaves are falling,

And the soft breeze sings through the leaves and limbs
With the low, sweet strains of enchanting hymns,

Like the voice of an Angel calling.

When the days are bright and the nights are grey.

And the squirrel turns from his summer's play

To carefully gather his stores away

As the rich, brown nuts are falling.

Then the mystic chords that pervade the trees

Soon soothe the toil-worn heart to ease,

Like the voice of an Angel calling.



FRIENDSHIP.



Where shall we look when the heart is sad

With the burden of many cares?

Where shall we turn when the weak and bad

Have covered our pathway with snares?

Where shall we seek for a helping hand

When the body and spirit bend?

Ah! then we must seek for courage and

Unbosom ourselves to a friend.

Where shall we go when the heart is gay

And throbs with a pure delight

That lightens the weight of toil by day

And sweetens our sleep at night?

What shall we do when the battle of life

Goes on with a glorious trend?

Ah! then in the joy of the world's strife

We must share our hopes with a friend.

AU REVOIR.



Written for the menu of a banquet to John Mitchell on the eve of his departure to attend the British Trade Union Congress as a Fraternal Delegate from the American Federation of Labor.



We're a goin' to give a blow-out to Johnny Mitchell, now,
In honor o' the trip that's addin' laurels to his brow.
And when he leaves his native heath our hearts 'll fill with
pain

And keep a constant longin' till we git him back again.
There ain't no use o' talkin', all the time he is away
We'll miss him in the councils, and we'll miss him in the fray
When sturdy blows are needed 'gainst the wrong and for
the right,

For though he is a man o' peace he ain't afraid to fight.
He's got a way about him some employers doesn't like,
He beats them in convention and he whips them in the strike,
But he's won their admiration, and its growin' more and
more,
For they know he stands for justice and he's honest to the
core.

So we're goin' to give a blow-out to Johnny Mitchell, now,
In honor o' the trip that's addin' laurels to his brow.
And in this partin' moment as we bid him "au revoir,"
We hail him Labor's Prince o' Peace, likewise its King o'
War.



JOHNNY JUMPER.



He's a little chap, is Johnny,
Frail of form and pale of cheek,
With a modest disposition
And a manner mild and meek.

Not a soul in all the village,
Where the boy was born and bred,
Ever guessed the latent forces
Lying dormant in his head.
If you'd asked his nearest neighbors
If they thought him really bright
They'd have answered very plainly
That they thought his heart was right,
"But so far as brain is needed
For to plan and scheme and such,
And for nerve to execute it,
Johnny don't amount to much."
In the many miners' meetings
He had not a word to say,
And whatever was decided,
That was always Johnn's way.
For he learned the lesson early,
In the plain Trade Union school,
That the judgment of the many
Is the judgment that should rule.
So he left his work serenely,
Taking all his kit along,
When, one day, a strike was voted,
For to right a grievous wrong.
Four long months the strike had lasted,
With no settlement in view,
And the men had scattered widely,
Looking for some work to do,
Leaving but a few behind them
To protect their interests there,
One of whom was Johnny Jumper
On whose shoulders trust and care
Were experiments. The action
Of selecting him to lead

In a move of such importance
Seemed a strange and risky deed.
But he wore his added honors
In a modest, manly way,
And his form was ever present
In the thickest of the fray,
Cheering on his weaker comrades
To a more determined stand,
While maintaining law and order
With a firm but gentle hand.
Thus it was one Autumn evening
When the strikers all had gone
From the village, save the pickets
Whom the men depended on
To apprise such stray wayfarers
As might seek employment there,
Of the burdens of oppression
Which they sought to make more fair,
That a horde of drunken rowdies,
Filled with liquor to the brim,
Freely furnished by the bosses,
Through their leader, Broncho Tim,
Worked themselves into a frenzy
While they strutted up and down,
Shouting loudly their intentions—
That of "cleaning out the town."
Broncho Tim, fierce, tall and brawny,
Swung his pistol o'er his head,
Challenging to mortal combat
So that he could shoot him dead,
Any man among the strikers
Who would dare to meet a foe
With the reputation he had,
Gathered in the long ago.

Rumor whispered, faint and lowly,
Only as such rumors can,
That, on more than one occasion
Broncho Tim had "killed his man,"
And their bones were slowly bleaching
On some boundless Western plain,
Proving his undaunted courage
But his challenge was in vain.
By the silence much emboldened,
Loud and rank his curses grew,—
Called them anarchists and cattle,—
Swore he'd bore their bodies through,—
Gathered all his rowdies round him,
Drove the sheriff from the place,
Styled himself the "Lord High Mayor,"
Shoved his gun in every face
With his challenge. Johnny's patience
Fled. A pale film swept his brow,
"Sir," he calmly said, "Your challenge
Is accepted here and now.
Pistols, I suppose, will suit you,—
Any distance that you choose,
But three paces is sufficient.
What! You surely don't refuse
After all your blow and bluster?"
While he spoke the giant's frame
Swayed and trembled like an aspen,
And his knees together came
With a rythmic, fast vibration
To his pulses keeping time,
All his courage oozing from him
Like the filthy flow of slime.
Then the men he had about him
As they saw his startled face,

Lost their arrogant assertion
And prepared to leave the place.
"I am sick today," he muttered,
But some other day we'll see
If a stunted little pigmy
Can defy a man like me."
Then the rowdies, all crestfallen,
With their leader marched away,
Leaving peace and hope behind them
And the miners won the day.



Lines on receiving a present of

A NEW PEN.



I hain't bin a writin' but little of late,
I've bin lazy an' tired an' dull,
An' thoughts wouldn't think in my old thick pate
Er ideas enter my skull.
But I hain't as tired 's I used to be
An' I've started to writin' agen
No more of the lazy and dull fer me—
'Cause I've got a new pen.
Ideas may come an' ideas may go
Like the regular tides o' the sea,
Any one with ideas can write, you know,
Tho' it may not read easy an' free.
It's good to be pushin' ideas along
To add to the wisdom o' men,
So I feel the old longin' for writin' grow strong—
'Cause I've got a new pen.

MEMORIES.



The pale moon sends its mellow silvery beams
In faintly glowing shimmers through the trees,
Casting the shadows of the limbs and leaves
In myriad forms, changing with every pulse
Of passing fancy that the mind creates.
Soothing the soul to sleep with that quiet peace
That fills its slumbers with refreshing dreams
And memories of the past. We live again
The boyhood days with every escapade
And petty prank—our quarrels with our friends—
Forgiven in a day—the pretty petite form
And dreamy eyes of her for whom we first
Conceived the subtle sentiment of love;
And all the likes and dislikes of our youth,
Passing before us in the softened light
Formed by the moonbeams and the lapse of time.
Again we play the truant from the school,
And wander off with some congenial mate
Into the woods, where flows the mountain brook
In tiny foaming cataracts where lurks
The speckled trout. With angle worms for bait,
A slim birch sapling fitted for a rod
And twine well knotted to the pole and hook,
We seek with patience worthy of success,
To lure the wary beauties to their death.
And when at last we land a hungry fish,
Less cautious than the rest, that takes the bait
Our crude art has prepared, we leap with joy,
And all the dread we had of going home;
The fear of father's vigorous reproof;
The earnest admonition mother gave,
The angry master waiting at the school;
Are driven from our thoughts, lost for a time,

Or buried in the raptures of the hour.
We stroll once more across the pasture field
Dotted with daisies, common as the grass
That grows beneath our feet. Nor do we see
The beauty of their bloom until in later years,
Far distant from the spot whereon they grew,
In some vast town where flowers are seldom seen
Fresh from the fields, when slowly on our minds
The truth begins to dawn with growing force
That these pale petals with a heart of gold,
Passed by unheeded in the country fields,
Are worthy of a place in men's esteem
Who love pure beauty just for beauty's sake.
The sultry summer day we spend with glee
Lolling about or swimming in the hole
That deepens in the stream above the spot
Where creek and river join. The hot sun glares
Upon our naked forms and burns the skin
'Till crimson blisters raise upon our backs.
We heed it not until the chafing clothes,
Erstwhile put on, reminds us of the truth
That no great pleasure ever comes to man
That does not bring its counterpart of pain.
We fear to tell the torture we endure
'Till night comes on and mother finds it out.
Allays the pain with buttermilk or cream
Cool from the cellar, while she gently scolds
And sends us sobbing early off to bed.
And thus the moonbeams play upon the mind,
Rousing to life the sentimental traits
Long dormant from disuse or other cause.
That man is hard beyond the wont of men
Who does not dream of better things to be
Or send his feelings floating o'er the past
Beneath the pleasant magic of the moon.

THE EXPLOSION.



Deep beneath the rolling prairie
Shone the miner's feeble light;
All around a dreary darkness,
Blacker than eternal night.
Hundreds there with pick and shovel,
Eking out their daily bread,
Heedless of the dang'rous gases
Or the treach'rous roof o'erhead;
Hundreds, who for years had labored
In the mines, from harm exempt,
Knowing well its many dangers
Held those dangers in contempt.
It was early in the evening,
Tools were being laid away,
For a week of labor ended
With the ending of the day.
Men with muscles sore and weary
With a week of toil oppressed,
Thanked the Lord who gave the Sabbath—
Gave it for a day of rest;
Thanked the Lord, yet while those feelings
From their honest bosoms start,
Hark! A rumbling in the distance
Strikes a terror to the heart.
Oh! how well they knew the meaning
Of that distant, dismal roar,
Quick they drew their coats about them,
Threw themselves upon the floor.
Through the headings, airways, chambers,
Every open space it came,
With a voice more loud than thunder,
With a solid wall of flame.

Rails and sleepers, doors and brattice,
Cars and timbers, coal and rock,
Crashing, tearing, rushing, roaring,
Flew before the mighty shock.
Stalwart men were but as feathers
Driven with a cyclone's ire,
Fast their flesh and sinews shriveled,
Scorched and roasted with the fire.
Some were hurled against the pillars,
Mangled, bleeding, dying, dead;
Arms and legs torn from the body.
Bodies severed from the head.
Loud the shrieks of burned and wounded,
Prayers and curses rent the air,
Strong men wept for helpless families,
Tore their garments in despair.
Soon the shocking crash was over,
Deadly vapors round them crept,
Wrapt them in a veil of poison,
Lulled the living 'till they slept.
Never men slept more intensely,
Never miner breathed more deep,
Not a soul in all the number
Ever wakened from that sleep.

Through the village on the prairie
Fast the fatal tidings sped,
And the rumors, wildly flying,
Told them all below were dead.
Wives and mothers madly weeping,
Frantic with a weight of woe,
Clasping babies to their bosoms,
Calling loved ones dead below,
Rushed to where the shattered debris
From the mine was strewn around,

There in agony and terror
Falling, fainting on the ground.
Brave men from adjoining places,
Noble, hardy, tried and true,
Held the women back from danger,
Meanwhile planning what to do.
Busy toilers aid preparing
Soon were ready for descent,
And, into the deadly chasm
Sturdy-hearted miners went;
Leading air, repairing brattice,
Working ever, night and day,
Till the airways all were opened
And the rubbish cleared away.

One by one the charred and mangled
Bodies of the men were found,
And with gentle hands were carried
To the rough morgue over ground.
Many hearts were rent with anguish,
Many tears of sorrow shed,
As with each arrival, loving,
Loved ones recognized their dead.

One there was, a pale-faced woman,
Waiting with her children five,
Hoping that each cage would quickly
Bring her husband home alive.
When at last they brought him to her,
Not a spark of life was there,
Then she threw herself upon him,
Clasped him with a calm despair,
Not a word of grief escaped her,
Not a tear bedimmed her eyes,

Not a sign betrayed her sorrow,
Save her deep-drawn, sobbing sighs.

In the gloaming, when the babies
All were wrapt in silent sleep,
Long that mother sat and pondered
With a heart too sore to weep.
Musing on the past and future,
Thinking of her husband, dead,
Grieving till her mind was broken
And her powers of reason fled.
Springing up she crossed the kitchen,
Cautiously she closed the door,
Then with oil besmeared the bedding,
Sprinkled oil upon the floor,
Lit a match; the fire fast spreading
Burned the building to the ground,
On the morrow six charred bodies
Were among the ruins found.
Thus were six more victims added
To the great explosion's claim,
And, although the jury rendered
That, "No person was to blame,"
There is yet a Court of Justice
From the power of money free,
Where the Judge—the Great Jehovah—
Will pronounce the just decree,
That all those who that day perished,
In the mines and fire, were slain
As a sacrifice to Mammon's
Overweening greed for gain.

MY FATHER'S DAY DREAM.



One evening last June when the day's work was over,
I sat all alone in my cozy arm chair,
And drank the perfume of the sweet-scented clover
That floated along on the cool, balmy air.
My trusty clay pipe 'tween my thumb and forefinger
I puffed with a lazy, luxuriant ease,
The smoke curling up for a moment to linger,
Then fade from my sight as it mixed with the breeze.

And as I sat thinking, the smoke curling o'er me,
There rose up a mirror-like vision of yore,
The land of my fathers lay plainly before me—
A beautiful picture from memory's store.
Yes, there stood the mill, 'neath the wide spreading rowans,
The miller's neat cot on the brow of the hill.
I saw the broad fields dotted over with gowans
And heard once again Avon's murmuring rill.

Bathed my hot limbs on its cool, rippling bosom,
Roved through the woodlands that rise from its side,
Plucked the bluebell and the hawthorn blossom
That flourish so full on the banks of the Clyde.
Gathered the woodbine and fragrant wild roses,
The daisy, the primrose and sweet heatherbell.
Chased the wild bee from its place on the posies
And searched for birds' nests on the trees in the dell.

There by the road stood the one-story houses,
The thin strip of woodland just over the way
Where the robin, the sparrow and little titmouses
Were chirping their praise to the glorious day.

And far up the hill with the stone wall around it
The high park in glory looked down on the plain,
While the stately old oaks in the center resounded
With winds that to fell them blew fiercely, but vain.

I saw there the deer when the cannon's loud rattle
Re-echoed like thunder o'er valley and hill,
Gallop off then come back, form like soldiers in battle,
Gaze wild at the cannon, excited but still,
Till another report sent them off in a hurry,
A frightened, excited, disorderly train,
Away round the hill in a terrible flurry
Then back through the same old maneuver again.*

And here, too, the native white cattle came bounding
Out through the dense wood with a wild savage grace,
The forest behind them with echoes resounding
Of huntsmen and dogs that took part in the chase.
I thought of the time when the forest extended
O'er nearly the whole of old Scotia's domain,
When cattle and deer from the mountain descended
To crop the luxuriant herbs of the plain.

When Wallace ere yet his fond hopes had been blighted
By cruel oppression's dire death dealing sting,
In hunting the game of his country delighted,
Content in the shade of oblivion's dark wing.
But the scene seemed to change to a ship on the ocean
Bound far to the West with its cargo and crew.
I gazed from its deck with a heartfelt emotion,
As slowly old Scotia receded from view.

* High Park or "Whaum," as it is commonly called, is a private deer park owned by the Duke of Hamilton, and on the brow of the hill facing the Royal Borough of Hamilton, several cannon are placed. On all gala days these cannon are charged and fired, producing the effect upon the deer, herein described.

And when the last trace of her outline was fading,
I stood on my tip-toe with uplifted hand
Laid over my temples, my strained vision shading,
To catch one more glance of my dear native land.
Then out from my dreaming the vision before me
Like Scotia's sweet shore faded slowly away ;
A dull, heavy feeling of sadness came o'er me,
And deep in my heart's inmost recesses lay.

True, there stood Penn's forest as stately as ever,
And, there, the wide meadows and tall growing grain,
And down in the valley the swift flowing river
Fast winding its way to the billowy main.
Yet though my heart loves them with loyal devotion,
My memory dwells on sweet visions of yore,
And pictures that country far over the ocean,
The land of my fathers, old Scotia's loved shore.

* * * * *

THE COAL MINER.

* *

A slight little fellow, not yet in his teens,
His arms to his elbows tucked down in his jeans,
No cares of the present, no thoughts of the past,
No plans for the future, no troubles that last ;
No bird as it sings o'er its nest in the tree
Its ode to the morning, more happy than he.
His loud ringing whistle, clear, piercing and shrill,
Re-echoes the joys of his heart o'er the hill
He is starting in life as a miner.

A youthful-like personage, wiry and strong,
Deep-chested, broad-shouldered, limbs supple and long.
The coal seems today to be flying more thick
Than ever before from the point of his pick.

Fast flows the sweat from each pore in his face,
As blow after blow brings the coal from its place.
What pride in his voice as she says: "By the way,
I want you to know I am sixteen today,
And I want a 'full turn' as a miner."

A middle-aged man with a calm, pleasant air,
His face and his brow slightly furrowed with care;
Fighting life's battles with stubborn will,
Doing his work with a masterly skill.
Leading his comrades in honors grown gray,
Taking their laurels triumphant away.
High as a workman has risen his fame,
Till over all others is spoken his name—
He is just in his prime as a miner.

An old gray-haired person who walks with a cane,
Every wrong step brings a volley of pain.
Walks a short distance, then stops for a rest
From difficult breathing, pains all through his breast.
Telling with glee and a care for the truth,
Great tales of the digging he did in his youth,
The "soft snaps" he had and the hard work he'd done,
The foes he defeated, the laurels he won—
He has worked all his life as a miner.

A plain, common coffin, no trimmings of gold,
Its occupant lifeless, rigid and cold;
Gone from this life with its pleasures and pains,
Its rises and downfalls, losses and gains.
Now all his work as a miner is o'er,
And the tales he once told he will never tell more.
Green o'er his grave, let sweet immortelles grow,
Now since he's gone where all mortals must go—
All mortals as well as a miner.

THE PATRIOT'S OATH.



(A Tale of the Convict Labor System.)



Scene First.—A street in a mining village.—Brown and Graeme meeting.

Graeme:

Good evening, stranger, whither are you bound,
On such a night, winds howling all around?
When keen, hard snow, fast driven by the storm,
Pierces and chills the warmest covered form
That dares to venture from a cozy hearth
Into the stormy elements of earth.
Whence are you bound? I ask, on such a night,
In such a garb, torn, comfortless and light,
Out through whose tattered shreds the rude winds blow,
And toss the shattered fragments to and fro.
Your cheeks already seem extremely pale
Beneath the biting fierceness of the gale;
Your hands are numb, enfeebled with the cold;
Your legs so weak they scarce your weight uphold.
Why not ere bedtime some warm shelter seek?
And leave the storm so fiercely cold and bleak.

Brown:

Ah, friend, (for friend you are indeed,
Else my poor hopeless lot you would not heed,
But pass me as some pass me whom I meet,
As though I were a reptile on the street).
It matters little whither I may go,
As there seems nothing left me now but woe.
But since you ask me in so kind a strain,
I'll tell you that I seek, but seek in vain,

A chance to trade some honest toil for bread,
That my poor wife and babies may be fed.
'Tis not the cold alone that pales my cheek,
And makes my legs and arms so numb and weak,
But hunger, gnawing hunger, thought and care;
Each help a portion, each have done their share.
For months and months I've tramped for many a mile
In search of some remunerative toil;
For weeks on weeks I've faced the tempest rude,
For days on days without a bite of food,
Borne on by hope, surmounting every care,
Till hope gave way to sullen sad despair.
Still on I tramped, yet dared not shelter ask,
Lest I be thrown in prison for my task;
There, like a worthless, mischief-making scamp
To serve a sentence, though an honest tramp.

Graeme:

But surely, stranger, there is something wrong
That you should be in search of work so long.
Why did you leave the work you had at home
Ere thus you started out the land to roam?

Brown:

The tale is lengthy—too long to be told—
Out here where all the elements are cold.
I must be moving, else the storm's keen breath
Will freeze this poor unsheltered frame to death.

Graeme:

Not so now, stranger, better come with me,
A bite to eat, a good warm cup of tea,
A cozy bed, a night of needed rest
May cheer you on to-morrow's cares to breast.

Brown :

A thousand thanks ! God knows I need it sore ;
It ne'er could be man's lot to need it more.
May God reward you from the stores of heaven
For this great kindness to a stranger given.

Scene Second.—Graeme's house, supper table set.

Graeme :

Come now, stranger, just bring up your chair
And help yourself from this our humble fare.
We boast no dainties delicately good,
But pure, substantial, health-sustaining food ;
To that you're welcome as the birds that sing
The sweetest carols to returning spring.
And yet, my friend, I do not know your name,
As for my own, 'tis simply William Graeme,
A miner trained to shovel, dig and blast.

Brown :

I'm Thomas Brown, a true knight of the last,
And now I'll tell you how I came to be
Out in the cold, when first you spoke to me.
You see, when first I called my Susie wife,
We hadn't much to start us out in life,
But through my work, her thriftiness and skill,
We soon had placed some coppers in our till.
Then came the panic, wages smaller grew,
Work grew more scarce, our family growing, too ;
To keep ahead we made a stubborn fight,
But could not do it, struggle as we might.
What little money we had laid in store,
Soon went to keep starvation from the door.
Then came a change, the panic passed away,

Our hopes increased, but not a whit my pay.
Up went provisions ten per cent or more,
And made us poorer than we were before.
I and my shopmates thought it just to ask
For greater wages for our daily task.
We held a meeting, made a just request,
But our employers seemed to think it best
To crush their toilers that the men might still
Be wage-slaves to a cruel tyrant's will.
They therefore told us they would pay no more
In wages than the price they paid before.
We argued, pleaded, threatened for a while,
Yet they refused, and we refused to toil.
They murmured vengeance, but we scorned their threats
Until they hired a gang of "prison pets."
Then we protested, but it was no use,
Law backed them up, and that was their excuse.
Seven cents an hour per head, they paid the State,
And we were launched to breast the storms of fate.
I left my wife, my family and abode,
And ever since have been upon the road
Searching for work my family to maintain.
Struggling 'gainst fate, yet struggling in vain,
Hoping for better, ever growing worse
Till now I'm branded as my country's curse.
East and West, and North and South I've been,
City and hamlet each my face have seen;
Go where I will, the same words greet my ear:
"We need no help, we can not hire you here."
I've sold and bartered everything I could
That I might get me necessary food,
And that, my friend, is why I am so nude.
I know not yet how Susie may have fared,
But if a few more days my life is spared,

Her tears of grief shall mingle with my own;
Unless (Oh, God forbid!) her spirit's flown.

Graeme:

Oh, fair Columbia! Land that gave me birth!
Where is your justice? Where your boasted worth?
Why are your honest, hardy sons of toil
Cursed by a system foreign to our soil?
Why force them thus stern winter's storms to face
By putting convict toilers in their place,
At such a wage they scarce enough can gain
Their paltry prison diet to maintain.
Was it for this your noble Warren died?
Was this the reason Washington defied
The power of all that Britain could command
To make a serfdom of his native land?
Was this what Henry's eloquence inspired?
Was this the end that Jefferson desired?
Was this the freedom Adams proudly sought?
Was this for which your sons so proudly fought,
Each one preferring, resolute and brave,
To die in freedom than to live a slave?
Cursed be such laws, and doubly cursed the knave
Who through them makes his fellow-man a slave.
Oh! for a spark of good old Yankee fire
To thrill our slumbering souls with that desire
For freedom, which from many a humble hearth,
Was taught to those who gave our nation birth.
Then would these slavish laws be rent in twain
And freedom greet us with her smile again.
Those who desire the race for wealth to win,
By patronizing such a hellish sin,
May purchase goods by convict labor made,
And sell their souls to Satan in the trade,

But by that right hand now upraised in air,
With God and you as witnesses I swear
Never to purchase while life's breath I draw,
Convict goods made under such a law.



LINES ON LEAVING HOME WHEN BLACKLISTED.



The dark shades of night on the mountain are falling;
The clouds over head are all tinted with gold;
The shepherd his sheep from the hillside is calling
And gathers them tenderly into the fold.
The air with the whipporwill's song is vibrating;
The low of the cattle sweeps over the plain;
All glad, though my bosom with pain is dilating,
For soon I must part from my Agnes again.

Agnes, whose smile fills my bosom with pleasure,
Whose slightest caress is a fountain of joy.
Agnes, my darling, my heart's sweetest treasure,
So tender and loving, so gentle and coy.
Oh! cruel misfortunes have gathered around us,
All our fond hopes have been severed in twain.
Broken, the fond expectations that bound us,
For soon I must part from my Agnes again.

Happy the moments, unheeded their fleeting,
When clasping my darling's sweet form in my arms,
Kissing her lips and a story repeating
That added a bright blushing grace to her charms.
Softly I sigh in the depth of my sorrow,
Since all those pleasures have turned into pain,
Soon will appear the gray dawn of the morrow
And then I must part from my Agnes again.

BLUE EYES.



There's an exquisite something about her,
Some undefinable grace
Of spirit or form, that without her
Dear presence about the place,
Sends the covetous heartaches thronging
Each other in wild surprise,
That I can not control the longing
To gaze in her sweet blue eyes.

Such eyes: In their limpid beauty,
So pleasant and strong and true,
Urging me on, when duty
Seems more than my strength can do.
I toil, and deem it a pleasure,
Yet, pray that God may devise
For me a lifetime of leisure
To gaze in her sweet blue eyes.



THE LOG CABIN.



The old log house, it stands there yet,
Low, nestling in the hollow.
Its drooping eaves in summer,
Shelters many a brooding swallow.
The rough-hewn hickory timbers now
Are mouldering in decay,
And many a chink and crevice gaps
That once was filled with clay.
The great stone chimney, torn and rent
With years of changing weather,

Leans hard against the gable end
Still holding well together ;
Though here and there the stone and clay
Is tumbling to the earth,
And debris from the chimney top
Lies scattered o'er the hearth.
The latch string long since disappeared
From off the cabin door,
And time has worn holes out through
The good old oaken floor.
The pleasant yard, where mother used
To spend her leisure hours,
Is covered o'er with ugly weeds
Instead of pretty flowers.
The little springhouse, frail at best,
The storms have torn away,
And all around the scattered boards
Lie crumbling in decay.

Oh, dear old house, I love thee yet,
Though tattered, torn and rent,
Within thy rough-hewn, sturdy walls,
My happiest hours were spent.
In childhood's days, when childish ways,
Filled life with sunny beams ;
And when in budding manhood, first,
My heart dreamt love's sweet dreams.
But all those happy times are now
Sweet memories of the past,
The sunny rays of childhood's days
Were too sublime to last.
Yet while one spark of life remains
My heart and veins to thrill,
And thy rough sides together stand,
Old house, I'll love thee still.

JOHN WELSH'S DOG IS DEAD.



(A *True Tale.*)



John Welsh is a good old fellow
That lives in our little town,
Who's only friend and comrade
Was his dog—a curly brown.
For many a year it had followed
Wherever its master led,
But now in yon shaded hollow
John Welsh's dog lies dead.

A friend more loving and faithful,
John never again will find.
No matter whither he wandered,
Drake plodded along behind.
Went with him by day to his labor,
By night kept watch by his bed.
Who would not pity our neighbor
John Welsh, his dog is dead.

Old John (the more's the pity)
Is fond of his "barley bree,"
And the other night in the "City"
He went upon the spree.
Poor Drake still faithfully followed
The bent of his drunken tread,
But when the sun rose in the morning
John welsh's dog was dead.

John started home in the darkness
When the midnight hour was nigh,

But he soon was sleeping softly
 'Neath a moonless starry sky.
While the dog lay down beside him,
 Watching o'er his earthen bed.
But before his slumbers ended,
 John Welsh's dog was dead.

Two travelers found John lying
 Asleep on the dusty road,
And were stooping down to take him
 With them to his quiet abode,
When Drake, still faithful as ever,
 Thought they meant him harm instead,
Sprang up to defend his master,
 And John Welsh's dog is dead.

For the man that the dog encountered,
 Drew out from his pocket a knife,
And slashing around in his anger,
 Soon bereft the poor dog of its life,
For a blow struck it fair on the jug'lar,
 Nearly severing body and head,
And there by the roadside, bleeding,
 John Welsh's dog lay dead.

Aimlessly hither and thither
 The old man wanders alone,
Sorely his heart is aching
 For the good old friend that is gone,
For the life of a noble being
 Passed out when its spirt fled,
And there, as a proof of its valor,
 John Welsh's dog lay dead.

No wonder the tear drops glisten
Like dew on the old man's cheeks,
And his voice grows hoarse and husky
When of his poor dog he speaks,
And the children watch, as he passes,
The careworn droop of his head,
And whisper the one to the other,
That "John Welsh's dog is dead."



TO A LADY, WITH A PRESENT OF AN ALBUM.



Dear lady, permit me to proffer to thee,
As a token of deepest respect,
This autograph album—slight gift though it be,
To use as thy mind may elect.
And as on life's highway we journey along,
Be thy life free from sorrow and care.
May thy heart be as light as the thrush in its song
Pouring out its sweet notes on the air.
And if fate in anger should drift us apart
Filling each of our bosoms with pain.
Yet may we still live with the hope in each heart
Of the pleasure of meeting again.



WRITTEN IN A LADY'S ALBUM.



Sweet fruit the prickly chestnut burrs contain,
Bright flowers oft blossom in the midst of tares.
So treat no man's position with disdain,
Nor rashly judge him by the coat he wears.

NANCY.



Who would not love sweet Nancy
With her lovely raven hair,
With her eyes so full of humor,
With her lips so rich and rare,
With her cheeks like budding roses
And a heart that's free from guile,
All her features softly glowing
In a sweet enchanting smile.

When the gloaming o'er the hill-tops
Throws a wierd and phantom light,
And the twilight slowly fading,
Ushers in the hour of night,
Then my heart beats wild within me
As I gaze into her face,
And I clasp her to my bosom
In a passionate embrace.

Oh! the pleasures of the moment,
Oh! the happiness and bliss,
When our lips are pressed together
In a sweet love-sealing kiss.
But the joy that fills my bosom,
Mortal never can express
When I ask her if she loves me
And she softly murmurs "Yes."

A LETTER HOME.



(Written while on a trip through the Anthracite region, looking for aid for the striking miners of Dubois, Pa.)



Dear Agnes: I'm up in the mountains,
In the woods, with the sun peeping through
As I sit down to write you this letter,
About what I am trying to do.
I know you'll be glad to receive it,
Though written half prose and half rhyme,
When I tell you 'tis helping me greatly
To pass off this wearisome time.
For I'm only engaged in the evening,
With nothing to do through the day,
And living so much among strangers
Time seems to pass slowly away.
I would like to see you and the babies,
And hear Adam's bright boyish talk.
(I was very near asking the question—
Are the babies beginning to walk?)
I can't tell exactly the reason,
When you tell me how lovely they grow,
Why, I scarce can believe that the babies
Were born such a short time ago.
We are still fighting on for the measures
Our men started out to defend;
But although we have justice to back us,
God only knows where it will end.
Still we pray to the God of our fathers
To strengthen a cause that is just,
And give us the power of a David
To crush this Goliath to dust.

And while we are praying to heaven
To give what assistance it can,
I am pleading the best I am able,
To get some assistance from man.
And I feel that the efforts I'm making
Are being productive of good,
For the men of the Anthracite region
Are helping our men to get food.
I did not intend when I started
To write you so lengthy a song,
So I hope you will not be angry
If I've happened to make it too long.
How long it will be ere I see you
Is more than I'm able to tell,
But I hope that this letter will find you,
Adam, Agnes and Hughey all well.

✱ ✱ ✱ ✱ ✱

SUNSET.

✱ ✱

September's sun, with autumn's glow,
Behind the hills was setting low,
Reflecting on Tioga's streams
The varied tinting of its beams.
And looking o'er to Barney's hill,
Where loudly sang the Whip-poor-Will,
His last clear song ere boreal time
Should force him to a warmer clime,
It tipped the tree tops with its light,
And kissed them, one and all, good-night.
The dusky shadows falling fast
A gloaming through the valley cast,
And when the russet glow had ceased,
It awed to stillness man and beast.

Each hill and valley, field and wood,
Seemed but a mighty solitude,
So calm and quiet the night had grown
Where nature called the scene her own.

* * * * *

HOME.

* *

Land of Penn, dear land of Penn,
Home of brave and honest men,
Land of women sweet and fair,
Pure as their native mountain air.
Let me view thee once again,
Fair, though rugged, Land of Penn.
Fondly now my mem'ry clings
To thy cool and limpid springs,
Forest glades and babbling brooks,
Sunny spots and shady nooks,
Rocky glens and mountains green,
Glistening in their summer sheen,
Miles of multi-colored trees
Bending to the autumn breeze,
Mountain ridges wreathed in snow
With the sunshine all aglow,
Till my spirit breaks control
And stirs the longings of my soul.
Land that soothed the savage breast—
Bent its will to love's behest,
Trusting in the powers above,
Preaching peace and God is love.
Land where monarch power was shorn,
Land where Liberty was born,
On thy past I look with pride,
With thee, now, my thoughts abide,
Let me view thee once again,
Fair, though rugged, Land of Penn.

DO YOU CALL THIS SPRING?

* *

Little Johnny Jump-Up peeping through the ground,
Long before the other flowers know that spring's around.
Laughing at us cutely with your merry yellow face,
While the chilly breezes keep a blowing round the place,
And the glistening icicles to the eavespouts cling.
Tell me, Johnny Jump-Up,

Do

You

Call

This

Spring?

Modest little Meadow Lark tripping o'er the sod,
Looking for a nesting place where man has seldom trod.
Coming to us early when the fields are brown and bare,
Singing through the meadows just as though you do not care
How the hoary frosts may bite or pelting sleet may sting.
Tell me, modest birdie,

Do

You

Call

This

Spring?

Little Robin Redbreast sitting on a limb,
Cheering all the neighborhood with your morning hymn.
Loud your notes of welcome on the morning breezes float,
While your human neighbor wears his winter overcoat.
Through the dreary winter we have longed to hear you sing.
Tell me, Robin Redbreast,

Do

You

Call

This

Spring?

A PRESENTATION.



Sweetest maid in all creation,
I revere the ground you stand on,
And my heart is palpitating
With a reverent abandon.
For although the ground is honored,
And because of that I love it,
All my veins thrill with devotion
To the girl who stands above it.

In the fullness of my passion
I present this little token
Of the thoughts I dare not utter,
Of the words as yet unspoken.
Then accept the gift and wear it,
And for me, life's largest measure
Will be filled to overflowing
With the sweetest kind of pleasure.



LINES WRITTEN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY.



Hark! the cannon's deafening roar,
Fiery flash and voice of thunder.
Symbol of those guns of yore
Tearing tyrants' chains asunder.
Hear the bells of freedom chime
Clearly, from yon ancient steeple,
Pealing for the hundredth time,
Warning to a freeborn people.
Hark! the cannon's deafening roar
Echoes as in days of yore.
May they, with their voice of thunder
Keep the tyrant's chains asunder.

Freemen, from your hearts rejoice
 That your rights are in your keeping.
 Many with no other choice
 'Neath a tyrant's power are weeping.
 On your Unity depends
 All your rights that's worth possessing.
 Break it, and your freedom ends,
 Keep it, and you keep a blessing.
 Freemen! from your hearts rejoice.
 Many with no other choice
 'Neath a tyrant's power are weeping,
 But, your rights are in your keeping.



(Lines inscribed to Nichol Ferguson, familiarly known as the "Bard of Cumberland.")



Auld Nichol, lad, my heart is wae
 Ta see ye toddlin' doon the brae.
 That pow o' yours noo turnin' grey,
 Has seen its share
 O' life, an' had its ain adae
 Wi' Daddy Care.

But still ye aye hae warstled through,
 Though whiles, nae doot, frae han' to mou.
 When work was scarce, and wages grew
 Amaist ower sma'
 Tae buy the necessities due
 Tae ane an' a'.

Noo, Nicol, I hae aften thought
 Hoo, in the pit, sa lang ye've wroucht,
 An' a' your work has come to noucht
 That's worth a stime,
 While auld age tae your door is brought
 Afore its time.

So when I read that letter frae
Yon "Miner" chiel, the ither day,
Thinks I, "That's no' just Nicol's way,
 Though by my hutch
'Tis kindly o' thae chapies tae,
 Tae say as much."

Then up I gat an' swore an' aith,
Quo' I, "By a' the powers o' death
I'll gather up my writin' graith
 An' write a letter;
An' in it something I will breath
 Will suit you better."

So, Nicol, wi' your kind consent
This proposition I present:
I'd like to see your works in print
 Ere very lang,
Makin' auld Scottish hearts content
 Wi' mony a sang.

Just gather up your rymin, ware,
"Auld Piper Jock" an' mony mair,
Syne pit them in the printer's care
 Tae print an' edit;
An' be the author e'er sae puir
 They'll dae him credit.

An' if the printin' has tae staun
For want o' siller in your haun,
Just hint the way that things are gaun
 Wi' pen or mou',
An' plenty here ilk steek would pawn
 Tae see ye through.

An' noo, my auld poetic friend,
My best respects tae you I send,
An' hope before this year shall end
A buek to claim,
Upon whose title page is penned
Your honored name.



THE EDITOR'S FATE.



Dear Brothers, weep not at the Editor's fate,
Your hearts can be proud though your grief may be great.
What good would it do you to weep yourselves blind,
When you know that his fate is the fate of mankind?
But a short time ago he was happy and free,
Could either stay sober or go on a spree
As his thoughts might incline, without any fear
Of a bitter tirade from a "sweet little dear."
No troubles to bother, no cares to distress him,
No sweetheart to torture, or wife to oppress him,
But free as the winds on a Western plain,
Or the dark rolling waves of the "billowy main,"
He went when he pleased and came when he would
And scorned womankind as a bachelor should.
But, Alas! What a change can take place in a day,
The man who at present may be the most gay
May tomorrow be led to the very same doom
That has laid the poor Editor low in his tomb.
The lamb that today gambols guileless at heart
May tomorrow be doomed to the caterer's cart;
Yea, the noble old eagle, our nation's delight,
That today spread his wings in a heavenward flight,
Ere another day more shall have passed o'er his head,
May be laid in the dust with his kindred dead.

And so in the bachelor's case 'twas the same,
In the height of his glory the fatal blow came.
While struggling on to accomplish his part
In the battle of life, he was struck by a dart
That a fellow called Cupid threw at him in sport,
Never stopping to think that the weapon might hurt.
Yet the Editor laughed with the merriest zest,
If we mentioned the arrow still fast in his breast.
When asked if it hurt him his humor increased
And he always would answer us "Not in the least."

But the wound kept on growing more broad and more
deep,
Till at last 'twas so great that he couldn't get sleep.
It gnawed at his heart till a fever came on,
And we knew from that moment his chances were gone.
He raved like a maniac, talked like a fool,
While a salt and ice pack couldn't keep his head cool.
So we called in the parson to soothe his distress
To counsel and guide him, to pray for and bless,
And the parson spoke comforting words in his ear.
He bade him take courage and be of good cheer
On the well-beaten pathway across the divide
Known only to those on the opposite side.
"For you know the Good Father, supreme over all,
Without whose consent e'en a sparrow can't fall,
Will guide you along on this desolate path,
'Tis the other ones only that feeleth his wrath."
Now the Editor blushed to a bright rosy red
When he found that his bachelor dreaming was dead,
And we knelt at the altar beside its remains,
Though we knew he had only been paid for his pains,
Thus proving the adage that sages have given:
"Those who lose hope on earth, look for comfort to
Heaven."

And now all ye bachelors bold have a care,
Take a brother's advice, I beseech you, beware.
Cure the wounds of Dan Cupid before 'tis too late
Or you'll surely be doomed to the Editor's fate.

* * * * *

GRACE.

* *

Our Heavenly Father, being all divine,
We now return our thanks to Thee and Thine,
For these few dainties from Thy bounteous store,
And when we need it, Lord, provide us more.

* * * * *

COAL.

* *

Across the lapse of Ages that have rolled
Into the Past since first the Ocean waves
Receded from the land, our fancies roam,
Resting at last upon a mammoth plain
Dense with the verdure that a tropic clime,
A virgin soil and moisture have produced.
The tall, majestic trees that kiss the skies,
The ferns and tangled shrubbery beneath,
Each in its own "Divine appointed way,"
Thrives for a time, to reproduce its kind,
And thus its mission seemingly fulfilled
It dies and crumbles into dust. The earth
Brings forth another generation which
Follows the course its predecessors ran,
And others come and live and cease to live
Leaving their mould'ring forms black with decay
Encumbering the land. Though mammals brouse
Upon the tender branches that shoot forth,

No master mind of man is there to change
The course of Nature's well directed plans
Or murmur at the needless waste of wealth
Grown in profusion in its varied forms
Only to perish and to decompose
Upon the earth, for no apparent good.
The molten lava seething underneath
The crust that forms our planet's outer frame,
Thunders against the weaker spots with all
The great, expansive force of heat, and lo,
Mountains arise, with grey and rugged peaks
Towering in massive splendor from the plains.
And here and there a sparkling spring breaks out
And trickles onward in its winding course
To meet the waters of another spring,
And others still, until a babbling brook
Is formed that plunges down the mountain side
To merge with other brooks, each rushing on
To spread its waters o'er the land below.
And ever as the seasons come and go
The humid atmosphere produces rain
That falls in more abundance than the soil
Can well absorb. Adown the rocky slope
The surplus waters flow with rapid force,
Grinding great fissures in the land and rock
From which the forms of future valleys spring.
And, pouring down its full, mud-laden stream
Upon the peat the forests have produced,
It leaves, as time goes on, a sediment
Of sand and soil a hundred fathoms deep
That hides the black deposit underneath.
And, erstwhile, man appears upon the earth,
Walking upright, the image of his God.
Master of all the beasts that walk or creep

Upon the land, and all the birds that spread
Their fluffy wings to catch the changing breeze,
And all the fish of every class and kind
That live within the waters of the brook,
The lake, the river or the mighty sea.
The wealth of vegetation on the soil
And all the riches that the earth contains
Are subject to his genius and his will.
Proud of his heritage from God he grows
In wisdom, gathered in the passing years,
And handed down, increased, from sire to son.
A great ambition wells within his soul
To know the earth and all that in it lies;
To harness Nature's forces to the car
Of Progress, for the welfare of his race.
He delves and from the bowels of the earth
Reclaims the long lost peat, a dusky mass
That time and Nature, working hand in hand,
Have transformed into coal. The furnace glows,
Creating light and heat in volumes great
That rivals in intensity the Sun.
The massive locomotive speeds along
The hillsides and the valleys of the land,
Panting beneath the burden of its load
It laughs at space and makes the Plymouth Rock
A nearby neighbor to the Golden Gate.
Over the Seas the floating palace glides
And in its wake the freighter moves apace,
Bringing to us the luxuries that men
In other lands and other climes produce.
And thus the long stored energy of coal
Springs into life at wisdom's magic touch,
Giving to man a masterful control
Of nature's forces far beyond the dreams

Of any former time, and now mankind
Rejoices in a closer Brotherhood.
And through it all a mighty unseen hand
Moves with a skill so deft, the narrow mind
Fails to foresee the consequence or grasp
The purposes for which It acts until
The end is near, when, from the furnace gleams
New life, new thought, new action and new hope
And then the coal, its mission at an end,
Its force exhausted for the common good
Returns to dust, its destiny fulfilled.

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